



Religious Education Policy

Adopted by the Governing Body (Performance and Standards committee): January 2013

Date last reviewed: December 2024

Next review date: March 2027

Signed: R Clark (Chair of Governors)

Signed: L Richards (Headteacher)

Introduction

As a Church of England Academy, we have a strong vision rooted in 'Let your light shine' Matthew 5:16.

We are striving for everyone to flourish, shining as lights in the world, following the example of Jesus. We are nurturing and treasuring the unique God-given light in everyone, children and adults, to light up our academy, homes and community with lived friendship, hope and compassion.

Our vision is rooted in the theological concepts of **creation and the incarnation**.

In the Old Testament, we see that God created all human beings in his image as unique, loved individuals. It was God's plan for all of creation, including human beings, to flourish. God's desire is for us all to be shining brightly, confident in our place in and contribution to our academy family and beyond.

Genesis 1:27: "So, God created human beings, making them to be like himself." **Psalms 139:13-14:** "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful."

In our community, we express this when we say: 'Let your light shine.' To us, this means being ambitious and determined to be the very best and fullest version of ourselves, as God intended us to be. We are proud of who we are and what we can achieve, and what we can be, pushing boundaries, trying new things, making a difference, being brave, and continuing to learn. We celebrate the lights that make each of us who we are and treasure the uniqueness and diversity of everyone. We are committed to the full flourishing of everyone – body, mind, and spirit. The work of our school is to equip everyone to discover and love their unique light, to express it boldly and confidently through their treasured gifts, and to find their role in bringing light into the dark places of God's world.

The Gospel's full accounts of the life, work and ministry of Jesus on earth, fully God, fully man, underpin our vision. John 10:30 Jesus said, 'I and Father are one'. Jesus, God made man, walked among those who were celebrating, those who were struggling – in the hard stuff and the good. In our ambition for everyone to flourish, to shine, we walk alongside each other in the joys and challenges of life – we call these joys and challenges. We work for everyone to encounter God through actions and support that bring healing in the low times, re-kindling lights that might be faltering. We work for everyone to encounter God in the now times, offering light enhancing experiences that open up opportunities and turn our eyes to the created and wider world.

John 10:10 I have come that you might have life, life in all its fullness.

Aims

Our aim at Southam St James CofE is to help our pupils, parents and carers and all members of the school community to grow, live and learn together. Following in the footsteps of Southam St James, we aim to nurture a sense of understanding and compassion for all and build courage and strength to live by our Christian values. We aim for all pupils to reach their potential and flourish during their time with us. We aim for each child to grow in the love of God and one another. We want our children to feel safe, secure and enjoy learning. We celebrate each child's successes and encourage the development of his or her confidence and self-esteem, so that on leaving our school they are well prepared for their next step in education.

The Legal Requirements

The 1988 Education Act states that 'Religious Education (RE) has equal standing in relation to core subjects of the National Curriculum in that it is compulsory for all registered pupils' as it is a necessary part of a broad and balanced curriculum.

By law, each Local Authority is required to have a Locally Agreed Religious Education Syllabus with the establishment of a Statutory Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE). As has become a historic tradition, Coventry and Warwickshire SACREs have come together to create and agree on a syllabus that promotes good, effective and thought-provoking RE, takes full advantage of the local context and is written in keeping with national developments with regards to the subject. This syllabus has also been supported by the Coventry Diocesan Board of Education. In the spirit of reconciliation, which is at the heart of this syllabus, this collaborative working builds bridges in the name of great education. Pupils are invited, through the syllabus, to explore matters of faith, spirituality, peace, reconciliation, community and morality.

Withdrawal From RE

Parents have a right to request their children are withdrawn from RE and to request that alternative arrangements be made, however it is our practice to talk with parents to ensure that they fully understand the aims and value of this subject to enable them to make an informed decision before we honour the right of withdrawal. Any parent wishing to withdraw their child should consult the Headteacher.

Where Our Curriculum Comes From

The curriculum we provide is based on the Coventry and Warwickshire Religion and Worldviews Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education along with the National Society's Understanding Christianity (Text, Impact, Connections) Project.

The Term Worldview

A worldview is understood to be the inhabited way in which a person encounters and interprets the world, understands it and engages with it. Worldviews may change over time. Individuals may be very aware of their worldview, having considered all aspects of it in a conscious and deliberate way, but others may be largely unaware of their own worldview, what shapes and influences it and how and why it has changed over time. Pupils will naturally fall on a spectrum from unconscious to well-considered worldview and this curriculum gives them the opportunity to acknowledge, explore and interrogate their own worldview as well as the worldviews of others.

Our Intent for A Worldviews Curriculum

It is our intent that Worldviews enables our children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions people can ask, whilst developing their knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other major world

religions and non-religious views. We believe that our curriculum helps our children to gain a deep awareness and understanding of their own and others' unique identities as they explore life's big mysteries and consider the answers to 'big questions' that are presented through a wide variety of world religions and belief systems. Through Worldviews children can become literate and articulate about religion and beliefs in order to become caring and compassionate members of society. The subject encourages children to demonstrate curiosity about faith and recognise how it impacts upon the lives of individuals, society and culture. Through Worldviews children reflect on their own beliefs and values in the light of their learning, and in doing so their respect for themselves and others develops and they feel drawn to imagine and to contribute towards a better world for all.

Our curriculum aims to equip our children with the knowledge and Cultural Capital they need to succeed in life. It encompasses the three dimensions to cultural humility: life-long learning and critical self-reflection; recognising and challenging power imbalances; respectful partnerships and institutional accountability. We see Worldviews as key in offering the best that has been thought and said. For example, when studying sacred texts and learning about the legacy of inspirational people who make a way out of no way from generation to generation.

S.M.S.C. Development

Support for pupils' S.M.S.C. development is intrinsic to our curriculum. It can be seen as the 'golden thread' which has a significant impact on learners. We aim to support:

- Spiritual development by developing pupils' knowledge of, and respect for, different people's faiths, feelings and values and their sense of fascination in learning about themselves and others.
- Moral development by developing pupils' interest in investigating and offering reasoned views about moral and ethical issues and ability to understand the viewpoints of others on these issues.
- Social development by pupils working and socialising with those from different religious backgrounds and by them developing mutual respect / tolerance of those with different beliefs.
- Cultural development by developing pupils' understanding and appreciation of the range of cultural influences that have shaped their heritage and others and the range of different cultures in school and further afield, whilst also recognising and valuing the things we share in common.

British Values

Religion plays a fundamental part in promoting British Values. Our learning will help our children to recognise that religions are committed to morality, social justice, a deepening of personal development and stewardship of the world. Our children will explore British Values in relation to religions and belief, through lessons in school, visits to places of worship and by meeting people from a diverse range of religious and belief societies. In doing so, they will become better informed and more empathetic, which will in turn promote cohesion and integration in society.

Aims - Church of England

According to the Church of England Religious Education Statement of Entitlement the aims for pupils are:

- To know about and understand Christianity as a diverse global living faith through the exploration of core beliefs using an approach that critically engages with biblical text.
- To gain knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and worldviews appreciating diversity, continuity and change within the religions and worldviews being studied.
- To engage with challenging questions of meaning and purpose raised by human existence and experience.
- To recognise the concept of religion and its continuing influence on Britain's cultural heritage and in the lives of individuals and societies in different times, cultures and places.
- To explore their own religious, spiritual and philosophical ways of living, believing and thinking.

Aims - Understanding Christianity Scheme

1. To enable pupils to know about and understand Christianity as a living world faith, by exploring key theological concepts.
2. To enable pupils to develop knowledge and skills in making sense of biblical texts and understanding their impact on the lives of Christians.
3. To develop pupils' abilities to connect, critically reflect upon, evaluate and apply their learning to their own growing understanding of religion and belief (particularly Christianity), of themselves, the world and human existence.

Aims - Coventry and Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus

The main aims of this syllabus are for pupils:

- To know about and understand a range of worldviews, both religious and non-religious, recognising both similarities and differences as part of study.
- To be familiar with possible answers to deep questions about self, others, the world and the possibility of a deity, drawn from a range of case studies from religion and worldviews.
- To become increasingly confident in the main disciplines of theology, philosophy and human and social sciences, and their associated tools and methods, to allow for rich academic study of religion and worldviews to take place.
- To have the time and space to reflect upon their own personal worldview and the personal knowledge they bring to RE lessons, considering what they might learn from religion and worldviews encountered and how these, in turn, might shape their own worldview.

Our Curriculum

At Southam St James, we are passionate about the fundamental importance of religion and worldviews both in the curriculum and in the lives of our children. Each year group engages with a minimum of a weekly one-hour Religious Education lesson where children develop their knowledge, understanding and skills in this subject and are prepared for life in a modern, diverse Britain and the wider world.

Our Religion Education curriculum is supported by two schemes. Teachers use the Coventry and Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus along with the National Society's Understanding Christianity Project. By carefully combining the two schemes, we can ensure a coherent and comprehensive curriculum with a clear outline of core learning 'building-blocks'. We can also provide high quality, engaging and inspiring learning experiences, which reflect both the Christian nature of our school and the range of backgrounds (religious and non-religious) of our families. Therefore, we can meet the needs of ALL our children.

Our long-term plan for Religious Education has been designed to ensure depth, breadth, balance and progression in terms of:

- The religious and non-religious worldviews studied.
- The key concepts encountered
- The disciplinary knowledge and disciplinary skills gained (theology, philosophy, human and social sciences, history)

Skills are developed during various learning opportunities. Through puzzling, looking closely, asking questions, exploring, interpreting, comparing, evaluating, interviewing, applying, analysing, challenging, questioning, appreciating, appraising, empathising, weighing up ideas, arguing, reflecting and imagining children can deepen their knowledge and understanding.

We ensure that disadvantaged children and children with SEND acquire the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life. Within lessons, we cater to the subject strengths and learning style preferences of our children. Children

have regular opportunities to extend and apply their English, Maths, Science, I.T., Geography and History skills. We work creatively, often using Art, Music and Drama as a way of exploring themes and key questions. Children work in a variety of ways and produce a variety of outcomes (intellectual, practical, personal and social).

Every lesson, we encourage independent, thoughtful and reflective practice upon a range of questions about spirituality and identity, morality, values and commitments. Children carefully consider their developing understanding of the world and become passionate about and learn to take responsibility for their place within their school, community, country and the wider world.

Planning and Delivery

Units of work from the Understanding Christianity Scheme and from the Coventry and Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus form the basis of our planning. Teachers use the example plans and resources to create relevant, stimulating and creative learning opportunities for their pupils, ensuring that the principles and processes that support quality learning within a unit are not compromised. Teachers adapt the plans and resources to ensure that their lessons meet the needs of all of their pupils, enabling them to learn more effectively.

Understanding Christianity Scheme

Understanding Christianity weaves approaches to teaching about Christianity that build upon the children's encounters with biblical concepts. Units of work address a key Christian concept through key questions and exploration of key biblical texts, the impact that they have on Christians and possible implications on the pupils themselves. Each unit incorporates the elements of:

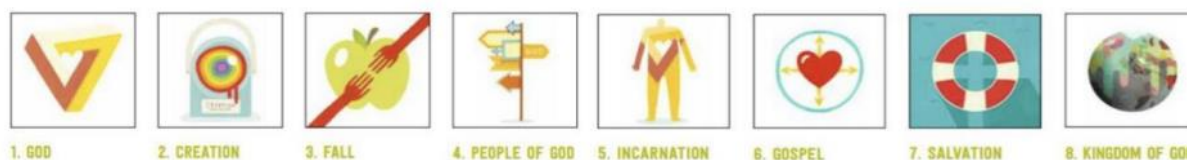
Making Sense of the Text: Developing skills of reading and interpretation; understanding how Christians interpret, handle and use biblical texts; making sense of the meanings of texts for Christians.

Making Connections: Examining ways in which Christians respond to biblical texts and teachings, and how they put their beliefs into action in diverse ways within the Christian community and in the world.

Understanding the Impact: Evaluating, reflecting on and connecting the texts and concepts studied, and discerning possible connections between these and pupil's own lives and ways of understanding the world.

The teaching materials use a variety of strategies and activities within each element, in order to engage pupils and develop their skills in RE and learning.








The following core concepts are explored in the Understanding Christianity approach, as part of the 'big story' of salvation:



The core concepts fit into a spiral curriculum, whereby concepts are revisited and explored in more depth as pupils move through the school. These are explored through key questions, however, and so are not applied exclusively — links and connections will be made between concepts during units.

Coventry and Warwickshire Religion and Worldviews Agreed Syllabus

This syllabus is structured around seven core concepts. These are:

	Belonging & Believing		Authority & Power
	Disciplines: Theo HSS		Disciplines: Theo Phil HSS
	Wisdom and Guidance		Changes
	Disciplines: Theo Phil HSS		Disciplines: HSS Hist Theo
	Personal Responsibility		Grand Narratives
	Disciplines: Phil HSS Theo		Disciplines: Theo Phil HSS Hist
	Living Well		
	Disciplines: Theo Phil HSS		

The concepts are repeatedly encountered as part of a spiral curriculum where these concepts are revisited from the different angles provided by a) case studies from a range of religions and worldviews, b) different 'ways of knowing' about religion and worldviews through the methods and tools of disciplines of study, c) the additional perspectives that come with age and maturity as pupils move through the education system. Each of the concepts are linked with specific disciplines so that the concept can be approached through nuanced and varied enquiry built around the different 'ways of knowing' about religion and worldviews.

The main disciplines of study are:



Theology: Beliefs about God, life, the world.



Philosophy: Ways of thinking about ourselves, our existence, the meaning of life and big questions.



Human and Social Sciences: Practices and ways of living.



History is also a key discipline for some units of study.

The syllabus combines three essential aspects to create a comprehensive learning journey for pupils:

Explore (substantive knowledge content drawn from religion and worldviews, explored as case studies in response to each enquiry question)- What?

Route (disciplinary lenses and their associated methods and tools, dialogue and debate around worldviews and lived experience and embodiment of worldviews)- How?

Perspective (personal knowledge: the positionality, reflexivity, reflectivity and metacognition of the pupil as learner and worldview explorer in RE) – Who?

Reflective Opportunities

There are reflective opportunities throughout each lesson and particular emphasis is given to self-reflection at the end of each lesson with carefully prepared reflection questions for pupils to answer on their worksheets. Pupils think about their own lives and experiences and consider relevant spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues in reflective and empathetic ways. They also identify roles and responsibilities they have within their school, community, country and the wider world.

Pupils also reflect at three key points during each unit of work. With the Understanding Christianity Scheme pupils pause to consider their prior learning (learning they already have before a unit begins), their current learning (learning gained

from completing the unit) and their future learning (next steps in their learning journey). With the Coventry and Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus pupils complete a worldviews checkpoint at the start, middle and end of each unit. They pause to consider a) how they might now answer the enquiry question from their own positionality and their own personal worldview and b) how this question might be answered by those with different worldviews.

Feedback and Marking

Teachers provide verbal feedback within lessons, which pupils respond to at the time. Teachers can give written feedback after lessons, which pupils respond to at the start of their next lesson, when their work is given back to them. Written feedback (such as key questions and next steps) may be used for extended pieces of work and when responding to answers given for reflective questions. All of this supports pupils with their learning and facilitates self-improvement.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Religion and Worldviews is assessed in accordance with statutory requirements and our school's Assessment Policy. Assessment in Religion and Worldviews will:

- Involve identifying suitable opportunities in units of work.
- Be directly related to the expectations of the Understanding Christianity Scheme and the Coventry and Warwickshire Religion and Worldviews Agreed Syllabus.
- Seek to identify development in the different areas of learning in the subject and not only in the acquisition of factual knowledge.
- Recognise the range of skills and attitudes which the subject seeks to develop.
- Include pupil self-assessment, e.g. at the end of lessons and at key points during units of work.
- Enable effective tracking of pupil progress to identify areas for development in a pupil's knowledge, understanding and skills, as well as whole school areas for development.
- Enable effective reporting to parents.

Teachers make a summary judgement about each pupil's achievement. Teachers use end of unit learning outcome descriptions from the Understanding Christianity Scheme and the Coventry and Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus to make 'best fit' judgements on pupils' attainment of knowledge and their application and understanding of the matters, skills and processes specified in the unit.

Assessment information from both the Understanding Christianity Units and the Coventry and Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus units are combined and summarised to formulate annual reports for parents / carers on the attainment and progress of their child in Religious Education.

Resources

Religious artefacts and other resources can be found in the resource cupboards in school. Each major world religion has a designated cupboard. Out of respect, the Qur'an (in its cover) has been placed above the cupboards, with nothing on top of it. Further Christian artefacts and Bibles can be found in prayer spaces in each classroom and in other prayer spaces around the school. Books linked to the current units being taught are also placed near to the prayer spaces in each classroom for children to read. There is a selection of books to support children's individual research when required.

For online material, the following are recommended to supplement teaching and learning:

- R.E. Today (School Support: Publications, Professional Development Courses, NATRE Membership, Resources, Understanding Christianity and Consultancy. Also the shop!)

- R.E. Online (Subject Knowledge; Teaching Resources e.g. festivals calendar, R.E. definitions, email a believer; Assessing R.E.; Leading R.E.)
- NATRE (Primary: Primary Courses, Spirited Arts and Children Talking)
- BBC Teach (My Life, My Religion: series of short films for each major world religion; Religions of the World: collection of animated films exploring the origins and stories of various religions)
- BBC Bitesize (Primary – KS1 or KS2 - Religious Education – choose from a range of topics concerning major world religions and children can watch the Class Clips)
- True Tube (award winning resources for R.E., P.S.H.E. and Citizenship).
- Coventry SACRE You Tube Channel
- NATRE You Tube Channel
- The R.E. Definitions APP which enables teachers to search for the pronunciation and meaning of more than 200 key terms.